

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) In a finishing system having at least one finishing device controlled separately from production devices that produce workpieces of a job wherein such finishing device has capability and constraint attributes, a method for controlling finishing operations comprising:

populating a virtual finishing job ticket database, the populating comprising:

a) storing in the database a list of capability, temporary and permanent constraint attributes for each available finishing device;

b) receiving finishing job description information, including descriptions of job segments of the job that ~~conform to~~ are capable of being performed given the capability, temporary and permanent constraint attributes of the finishing device; and

c) storing the finishing job description information in the database;

directing finishing operations based on the populated virtual finishing job ticket database without operator intervention.

2. (Original) The method of **Claim 1**, wherein the step of receiving finishing job description information comprises receiving a description of finishing operations for a job comprising printed sheet workpieces.

3. (Original) The method of **Claim 1**, wherein the step of receiving finishing job description information comprises receiving such information from a production monitor controller.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of **Claim 1**, wherein the step of receiving comprises receiving reference pointers to locations where some specific job description information is stored.

5. (Original) The method of **Claim 1**, further comprising arranging finishing job description information in a hierarchical manner.

6. (Original) The method of **Claim 5**, wherein the step of arranging further comprises arranging in a hierarchical tree structure.

7. (Original) The method of **Claim 5**, wherein the step of arranging in a hierarchical manner further comprises including, within at least one node at each level within the hierarchy of nodes, reference pointers to at least one node at a different level in the hierarchy such that all nodes of a job are referenced by at least one other node within the hierarchical arrangement of nodes.

8. (Original) The method of **Claim 5**, wherein the step of arranging further comprises arranging a top level node comprising job identification data.

9. (Original) The method of **Claim 8**, wherein the step of arranging a top level node further comprises including within the top level node reference pointers to at least one node at a hierarchical level below the top level.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of **Claim 5**, further comprising including at least one node within a hierarchy of nodes in which one of a pre-designated list of document forms is identified as applying to a document to be finished during the finishing job.

11. (Original) The method of **Claim 10**, further comprising using a reference pointer within at least one node to a list of attributes of the identified document form, which list is stored outside of the node itself.

12. (Original) The method of **Claim 3**, wherein the step of receiving comprises receiving from the production monitor controller job model information comprising information associated with possible threads for production of the finishing job.

13. (Original) The method of **Claim 12**, wherein the step of receiving job model information further comprises receiving build sequence information for production of the finishing job.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of **Claim 13**, wherein the step of receiving build sequence information includes receiving information for programming operation of at least one finishing device to be used during the finishing job.

15. (Original) The method of **Claim 5**, wherein the step of storing further comprises storing information for different job segments in different nodes within a hierarchy of nodes.

16. (Original) The method of **Claim 5**, wherein the step of storing further comprises storing information in a plurality of nodes at the same level within a hierarchy of nodes.

17. (Original) The method of **Claim 1**, wherein the step of receiving further comprises receiving information associated with job segments produced by different production equipment and wherein the step of storing further comprises storing information describing such different job segments in different nodes of the virtual finishing job ticket database.

18. (Original) The method of **Claim 17**, further comprising creating an information node within the virtual finishing job ticket database wherein descriptive information of a job segment is stored, such job segment comprising a combination of a plurality of job segments produced by different production equipment.

19. (Original) The method of **Claim 1**, wherein the step of receiving further comprises receiving the finishing job description information from a production monitor controller.

20. (Original) The method of **Claim 1**, further comprising providing access to the stored finishing job description information to a finishing module controller.

21. (Original) The method of **Claim 1**, further comprising associating the stored finishing job descriptions information regarding at least one job segment identifier code such that stored information can be accessed through use of the job segment identifier code.

22. (Original) The method of **Claim 1**, wherein the step of receiving further comprises receiving a digital copy of a virtual finishing job ticket.

23. (Original) The method of **Claim 1**, wherein the step of storing capability and constraint attributes further comprises storing capability and constraint attributes for all finishing devices usable for the finishing job.

24. (Original) The method of **Claim 23**, wherein the availability of a finishing device is one of the attributes stored in the virtual finishing job ticket database.

25. (Original) The method of **Claim 1**, wherein the step of receiving comprises receiving data for controlling at least one finishing device.

26. (Original) The method of **Claim 1**, wherein the step of receiving comprises receiving integrity data used after performance of the finishing device in order to confirm that the job was finished in accordance with the job description data.

27. (Cancelled).

28. (Currently Amended) A finishing system comprising:
at least one finishing device;
a production monitor controller; and,
a virtual finishing job ticket database that includes:

a) job construction data;

b) control data used during ~~for~~ automated instruction of the at least one finishing device; and

c) integrity data used after performance of the finishing device in order to confirm that the job was finished in accordance with the job control data.

29. (Previously Presented) The virtual finishing job ticket database of **Claim 28**, wherein the job construction data, control data, and integrity data are stored in hierarchically arranged nodes of information.

30. (Previously Presented) The virtual finishing job ticket database of **Claim 28**, further comprising a means for retrieving from the database an entire virtual finishing job ticket from information provided by a single job segment identifier.